"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills."
Psalm 121:1

"A MATTER OF HORIZONS"

One of Songs of Ascent - group of songs sung by travellers making annual pilgrimage to Holy City. This particular psalm sung as weary pilgrims came in sight of mountains surrounding ancient city. On morrow they would arrive at very gates and with joy would sing Psalm 122.

Psalm of trustful confidence. God their keeper. He sleeps not. Their protecting God for ever. A glorious psalm. The mountains and hills not only symbolize confidence and security, but also suggest adventure. In the psalm there is a gradual and ascending movement until eyes of pilgrim are fastened upon the Hills of Zion - on the horizon. Please allow me a little poetic license this morning - allow me to paraphrase verse to read, "I will lift up mine eyes to horizon."

LURe OF HORIZON Word "horizon" not in Bible; I grant that. But that the horizon symbolizes is in the biblical narrative. Imagination stirred as we think of biblical heroes of centuries gone by who were lured by adventure and coerced by daring hazards beyond horizon. Men filled with divine discontent and who sought to get away from "dull, misty flats of life". 

Abraham for example. Leaving home and security. Looking for a city whose builder and maker is God - eyes forever on horizon. Moses another. Leading people from dull flats of slavery to far-off horizons and a Promised Land. And Paul whose eyes were forever lifted toward distant horizons. Preaching in cities of Asia Minor; crossing over into Macedonia; down into Greece; then on to Rome. And perhaps to Spain. Paul had his castle there. Forever on the move; lured by distant horizons.

Let's be practical for a moment. What is the horizon? May be described as the circular line where sky and earth or sky and sea appear to meet.
Circular line there since beginning of time. Beyond that circular line is the abyss where sun rises and sets. But the horizon is a movable affair. It depends upon two factors. First, the power of one's vision. Remember matching my vision against that of sailor on way across Atlantic. Second, the elevation of one's position. On ship there is lookout in the bow; one on the bridge; and one in the crow's nest. Their position determines what they see - depends upon elevation.

True of life in general. There is difference between one person and another. All in the matter of horizon. One person's horizon very close to him; can almost circumscribe it with outstretched finger. Lives out his days in a small and mean circle. Interests limited. Few friends. Wrapped up in himself. Makes a small parcel. Unwept, unhonored, unsung. Other hand, another person's horizon is almost unbounded. He moves with freedom within a large circle that is unbounded. No sense of being cribbed, cabined or confined. Feels breezes of heaven upon his cheeks. Horizon out as far as human life and human interest extend.

The circle is small or great depending on our strength of vision and altitude. How much are we interested in other people? How much are we concerned for others? Hungry and stricken of the world. Thank God for those in church and city interested in sending help to others. Proud of my church in this respect. But rather ashamed my city of Gloversville has not done much toward bring displaced families to city.

Become selfish at point of our religion. Go on assumption Christianity is just for us. Forget seething multitudes of world. Danger of being as parochial as vermonter - "God bless me and my wife..." Yet, Christ's horizon was wide as humanity. Cannot escape universal implications of His message. Last injunction, "Go ye into all the world preaching the gospel". Pathetic weakness of local churches - too local.
LIMITED HORIZONS Someone exclaims, "I find it hard to hold a distant horizon in my view. Horizon constantly presses in upon me. I feel imprisoned." We all get that feeling sometimes. Reminded of geography lesson - "England; bounded on N. by Scotland, on S. by English Channel, on W. by the Irish Sea and Wales, on E. by North Sea". Life can get like that - bounded on all sides; by physical considerations; by economic factors; by environmental limitations. Horizon closes down.

Closes down sometimes because tired and overwrought. All seems dark and depressing. Nothing to live for really. Don't know why I was born. Always bring to mind the Prophet Elijah. Remember him? Read 19th chapter of First Book of Kings. Following exploit on Mt. Carmel, Elijah went a day's journey into wilderness. Plunged himself under juniper tree and beseeched God he might die. Listen; "It is enough. Lord, take away my life. I am no better than my fathers". Picture of disappointed hopes. Slough of despond. All fight gone out of him. Suffering from physical and nervous reaction. Having a hard time.

Not always easy to lift one's eyes to the horizon. In doctor's office. In dentist's chair. In hospital bed. Yet we may remember that Paul wrote his most famous letters from prison. John Bunyan the travelling tinsmith a prisoner in Bedford Gaol for many years. Yet his thoughts eluded bolts and bars and he gave the world his immortal classic "Pilgrim's Progress". R. L. S. gave great literature to world. But we forget he was a sick man when he wrote. There is no smell of medicine bottle in any of his books.

PUSHING BACK HORIZONS What can be done when things press in upon us? How can we push back our horizon? God has many ministering spirits. This is a sacramental world in which we live. Beauty and art can do it? They provide an escape into eternity. Great music will break
barriers and extend boundaries. Will push back the horizon until our finite lives come under the influence of the beauty and glory of the infinite. But it must be great music.

And what is true of great music is true of great literature. So Emily Dickenson tells of what great literature can do for spirit of man; "He ate and drank the precious words, his spirit grew robust; he knew no more that he was poor, nor that his frame was dust. He danced along the dinghy days and his bequest of wings was but a book". Horizons pushed back.

The beauty of nature will also push back our horizon. Hills girded with beauty. Skies flooded with loveliness. Fields clothed with corn. Glorious canvasses of sunrise and sunset; and seashore where waves come rolling in like silver from melting pots of God. Said Wordsworth - "I have felt a sense sublime of something far more deeply interfused, whose dwelling is the light of setting suns". Felt horizons pushed back. Lines by Georgia Harkness entitled "Sunset". Also Stidger's poem, "I Saw God Wash the World Last Night".

And of course, religion will do it too. It is function of religion to do just that. To give us to feel and know we are more than finite creatures - infinite as well - children of God. The pushing back of horizons comes through worship. Seen it happen so many times - in morning worship and in mid-week service. In hospital and homes when there has been a bit of prayer. Burdens lifted, horizons pushed back, peace restored.

As we have listened to word of God - "Cast thy burden on the Lord and He shall sustain thee. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew strength. From everlasting to everlasting thou art God. O God who wast, and art, and art to come, before whose face generations rise and pass away." What horizons for us. Just one more. "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden".

Last word. When the fever of live is over and our work is done. Story of Maude Hoydon's told at funeral for Jane Addams. "There she goes" "Here she comes".
"I saw the New Jerusalem to-night.
The portals of the sky were opened wide;
The clouds were radiant with celestial light;
My lake gave back its answer, glorified.
Behold, there was a throne set high and clear;
An emerald rainbow circled it, all fair;
And four and twenty thrones, I think, were near,
For jasper, sardius, gold were everywhere.
Before the throne a sea of crystal glass,
And round about were creatures in the sky;
Across the sea a path of burnished brass,
And there, it seemed, angelic hosts drew nigh.
I thought I heard them singing as they trod,
Holy, holy, holy, is Almighty God". Harkness.

I saw God wash the world last night
With his sweet showers on high;
And then when morning came
I saw him hang it out to dry.

He washed each slender blade of grass
And every trembling tree;
He flung his shoulders against the hills
And swept the rolling sea.

The white rose is a deeper white;
The red a richer red,
Since God washed every fragrant face
And put them all to bed.

There's not a bird, there's not a bee
That wings along the way,
But is a cleaner bird and bee
Than it was yesterday.

I saw God wash the world last night;
Ah, would he had washed me
As clean of all my dust and dirt
As that old white birch tree.

Stidger
ORDER OF MORNING WORSHIP

ORGAN - "Miserere" Byrd-Farnam
CALL TO WORSHIP - By the minister
HYMN 14 - "Through all the changing scenes of life"
 Minister: Create in me a clean heart, O God;
 People: And renew a right spirit within me.
 Minister: Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation;
 People: And uphold me with thy free spirit.
 Minister: O Lord, open thou my lips;
 People: And my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

DOXOLOGY - To be sung by all

***
SCRIPTURE - Psalms 121, 122
SOLO - "The 91st Psalm"
     Glenn Tanner, bass
PASTORAL PRAYER :: LORD'S PRAYER
***
ORGAN OFFERTORY - "In Heaven Above" Hokanson
PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS
HYMN 353 - "The King of love my Shepherd is" Dominus Regit Me

SERMON - "A MATTER OF HORIZONS"

HYMN 529 - "Jerusalem the golden" Ewing
Benediction - By the minister
ORGAN - "Postlude" Williams
*** Interval For Ushering

Rev. Fred Clarke, Minister
Miss Gloria Laccone, Minister of Music
Mrs. Harvey Connor, Minister's Assistant
Mrs. Keith Gifford, Church Secretary
Mr. Lewis Cunning, Sexton
**CALENDAR FOR TODAY**

10:30 **MORNING WORSHIP** and sermon - "A Matter of Horizons". Glenn Tanner, bass soloist.

7:30 **UNION EVENING SERVICE** on the lawn of the Kingsboro Presbyterian Church. Sermon by the Rev. Lawrence Larrowe. In case of inclement weather the service will be within the sanctuary.

Altar flowers today are given in loving memory of Mrs. Ethel Trevett by her family.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Due to the remodelling and renovation work now being done downstairs there will be no mid-week services during the month of August.

An opportunity will also be afforded to varnish the floors of the downstairs rooms.

Next Sunday, August 7 the first of the Union Summer Morning Services will be held in the First Baptist Church. The First Presbyterian and Fremont congregations will be guests.

Other Union Summer Morning Services are as follows: August 14, service at Fremont; August 21, service at First Presbyterian Church.

Miss Betty Ardizzone will represent our Methodist Youth Fellowship at the Troy Conference Planning Institute at Lake Sherman, August 15 to 21.

The Fremont Scout Troop has sent or is sending the following boys to scout camp; Ronald Cole, David Sanders, John Palmateer, Robert Fay, Raymond Green, Richard Roberts, Robert Meinecke, Alvin Gunneson, Peter Rumrill, William Hemsroot. Congratulations to our scoutmaster.
FREMONT STREET METHODIST CHURCH
Gloversville, New York
July 31, 1949

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